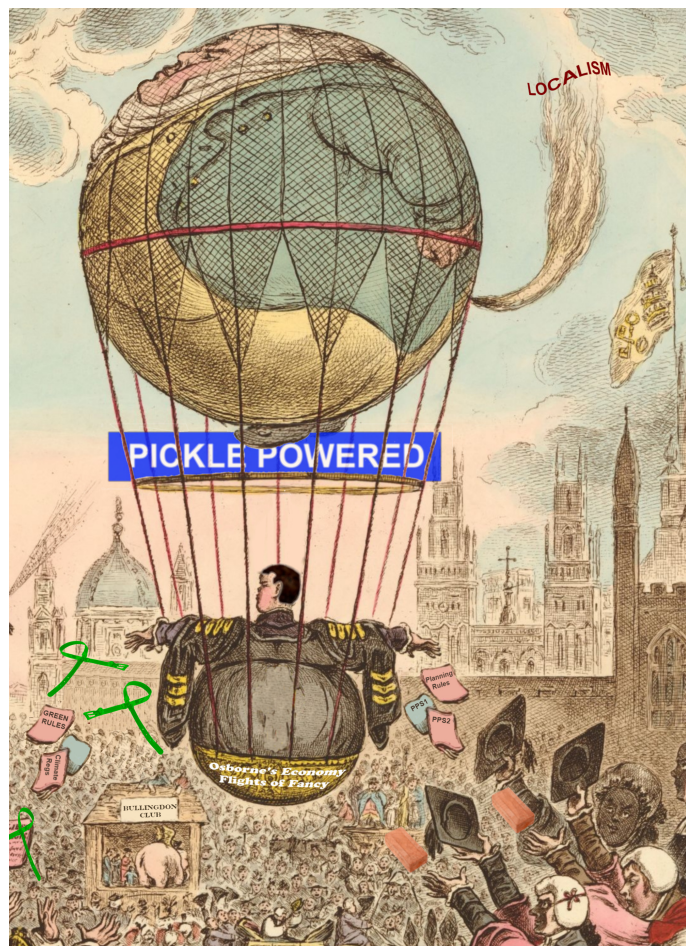


CPRE South East eBulletin Special

12 September 2011

50 Days of the Great Planning Row

Welcome to the latest special edition of the eBulletin. It examines fifty days in which the normally arcane and soporific world of planning became a national and social media campaign. There will be more analysis in our regular eBulletin in around two weeks time.



The planning Pickle powered economy. By George!

Bodders 2011 with apologies to Giffroy 1811

Full size image: <http://bit.ly/picklebygeorge>

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EDITORIAL: THE GREAT PLANNING ROW

On July 25, the planning debate burst out of the hallowed corridors of Westminster onto the pages of Telegraph and flooded across the media. Fifty days later, ministers are still struggling to shelter from the biggest storm in planning history.

It was a debate that nearly didn't happen. When the draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was leaked in early in June, it was greeted with near silence from the green movement. But at the end of July, the National Trust's launch of a campaign against the planning reforms made headlines just as CPRE launched a classic assault on urban sprawl. Their attacks so irked the holidaying government that it wheeled out local government minister Bob Neill to accuse the charities of being run by 'left wingers'. The row not only failed to die down but spread from the 'quality press' and BBC Radio 4 to the 'red tops' and even to Radio 2, where I heard CPRE's Shaun Spiers condemning the NPPF as I munched my muesli last Saturday morning. A few days before, the National Trust's chairman Simon Jenkins ran rings around planning minister Greg Clark on BBC 2's Newsnight. And last Wednesday, in a sign that the Great Planning Row is far from over, Fiona Reynolds swept into the Communities department for negotiations. She came out to tell the media that there will be no appeasement with ministers until they agree that the planning system is about environmental protection not economic growth.

CPRE and the National Trust have acted out complementary roles in the media over the last fifty days. The media danced with delight as the Trust (the 'cultural wing of Tory and Liberal Democrat-voting Middle England', chortled the Financial Times) took up cudgels against the coalition government Middle England voted for. There is no doubt that without the energy and clarity of voice of the Trust the NPPF controversy would have died weeks ago. But CPRE has supported the debate with detailed arguments and analysis. Both organisation's voices were and are needed to keep the NPPF campaign going. The development lobby has barely got a look in during this green crusade, despite Greg Clark's pleas to them. It has shown itself ill prepared to campaign on a matter that ministers and developers had thought they had sewn up.

One lesson for campaigning is that too often green groups spend time coordinating their messages through this coalition or that, ending up preparing joint statements that ooze with blandness. If there had been a green coalition against the NPPF, we would never had this level of media coverage. Polls show the public are only weakly informed and even less interested in planning. But as many in CPRE will know, getting 25% of people aware of any planning issue is quite an achievement. Countryside campaigning has burst into life and our landscapes, communities and environment will be better for that.

Those ministers who have made venomous attacks on CPRE and the National Trust in recent weeks will perhaps no longer feel as comfortable with green groups as they once did. That's unlikely to worry grassroots CPRE campaigners who for decades have walked the tightrope of working constructively with the planning system while condemning its excesses.

Ministers are however right to believe that their simplification and rewriting of planning principles will lead to a development bonanza and boost the economy—at least in the short term. But they are naive to believe that the NPPF will deliver the level of affordable housing needed, let alone the houses needed in rural England. And they are wrong to think that the new rules will protect treasured landscapes and townscapes. The pitiful truth is that ministers do not understand the implications of their own framework. And the cruel reality is unless ministers rewrite the NPPF, they will forever be remembered for panicking about the housing crisis and the economy, rather than planning to solve it.

Andy Boddington, Editor

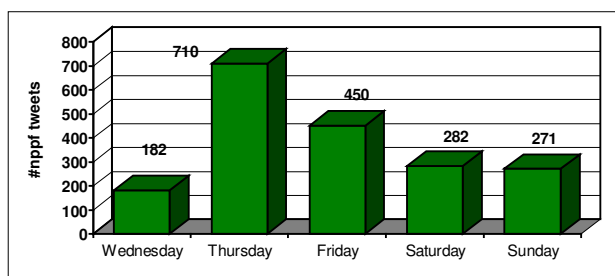
THE ANATOMY OF THE GREAT PLANNING ROW

"The Coalition has pulled off the remarkable trick of making land use planning interesting." Green Alliance

The NPPF. If there was any remaining belief that the Localism Bill stilled continued to champion localism, it was shattered on 25 July when the government published the draft National Planning Policy Framework for consultation. The contents of the NPPF were however a surprise to no one. We had already been one practitioners draft, as well as a leaked draft of the government text (CPRE SE eBulletins: <http://bit.ly/nppfpagse>; <http://bit.ly/nppfleak>; <http://bit.ly/cpresenppf>). At each successive draft, the government has tightened the emphasis of the NPPF to ensure that it is truly a developers' charter. The consultation draft leaves no doubt that boosting the economy overrides all other priorities, including the natural and historic environment.

Timeline. At the end of this eBulletin, we publish a detailed timeline of campaign as seen through the media, with links to online articles. The timeline takes some reading, but only when all the references are collated can the full intensity and dynamics of the anti-NPPF campaign be understood.

Twitter. The mainstream media coverage has been matched by a busy online campaign on Twitter (hashtag #nppf), with a smattering of activity on Facebook. This is the first time that social media have played an important campaigning role in the heartland of CPRE's bailiwick.



#NPPF tweets on Twitter

6am: 7 Sep to 11:59: 11 Sep. Analysis with thanks to @tomperry Oswestry

In the last five days, there have been 1,895 tweets about the NPPF, the large majority in opposition to the plans. In media impact terms, the most recent 50 #NPPF tweets as we go to press had a reach of 41,427 people (so they received them, but like your daily newspaper, not everything is read!). The top #NPPF tweeters in the last five days graphed above were:

- @wildelycreative (writer: 96 tweets);
- @AndrewLainton (91; planning consultant);
- @SaveOurWoods (68; campaign group);
- @hen4 (60; smallholder runs @SaveOurWoods);
- @andybidders (51; CPRE SE eBulletin editor);
- @Shyman33 (48; environmentalist);
- @Recurvirostrida (45);
- @nationaltrust (42; also tweets under other usernames);
- @CPRE (37; National Office);
- @greenbirmingham (37; Sandy Taylor, Birmingham City Council).

NPPF Campaign Resources

CPRE NPPF campaign (<http://bit.ly/cprenppf>).

National Trust NPPF campaign (<http://bit.ly/ntnppf>).

Telegraph Hands Off Our Land campaign (<http://tgr.ph/handsoffland>).

Andrew Lainton's prolific planning blog (<http://bit.ly/lainton>).

CLG 'myth buster' (<http://bit.ly/clgmyths>).

RTPI 'myth buster' (<http://bit.ly/rtpimyths>).

HBF 'myth buster' (<http://bit.ly/hbfmyths>).

FIFTEEN MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS ON THE NPPF

1. Planning death knell. Day 2; 26 July. The day after the consultation draft of the NPPF was published, the National Trust comes out fighting with Director General Dame Fiona Reynolds appearing in BBC Radio 4 Today, and giving interviews to the national press. She tells them: "This finally sounds the death knell to the principle established in the 1940s that the planning system should be used to protect what is most special in the landscape."

2. Left wing vested interests. Day 13; 6 August. The Telegraph publishes CPRE's map of the ten largest areas for greenfield housing development. Local government minister Bob Neill accuses the CPRE and National Trust of being "vested interests" that are run by "left wingers" who peddle "deeply misleading and simply untrue" claims. CPRE's Shaun Spiers says the "60,000-member CPRE is preparing to take the attack directly to David Cameron."

3. Shamelessly opportunistic gross hypocrisy. Day 20; 13 August. The Telegraph features a CPRE analysis that reveals that swathes of land, including in the green belt, will be redesignated to allow development. MP Jake Berry, aide to Housing Minister Grant Shapps, is venomous: "The CPRE can't have their cake and eat it. It's gross hypocrisy for them to take thousands of pounds of taxpayers cash to assist with the government's planning reforms yet at the same time be shamelessly opportunistic and attack them."

4. Risible nihilistic selfishness. Day 29; 22 August. Ministers step up their condemnation of green groups. In the Financial Times, Greg Clark says those who sought to "preserve in aspic" their towns were guilty of "nihilistic selfishness" because they will prevent young people from getting on the housing ladder. He condemns as "risible" the [alleged] National Trust claims that areas of green belt will be threatened by the changes. Clark also rounds on CPRE: "Frankly you couldn't change any element of national planning policy without the CPRE objecting to it".

5. Hands Off Our Land. Day 38. 31 Aug. The Daily Telegraph launches its 'Hands Off Our Land' campaign. Its leader says the government's actions are "a shameful way to treat rural Britain. The Coalition is trying to railroad its national planning policy framework without debate." In the Times, Business Secretary Vince Cable describes campaigners against the proposals as "semi-hysterical".

6. NPPF is a dud document. Day 39; 1 Sep. Newsnight pitches a confident National Trust chairman Simon Jenkins head to head with Greg Clark. Jenkins says he loves the Localism Bill but the NPPF ruins it: "It's a dud document". Clark offers to open talks: "If there are particular aspects or sentences that you don't think express clearly enough the protections that are there, then let's talk about it." Twenty three past presidents of the RTPI say: "the RTPI stands ready to bring the parties together to address the confusion and to resolve the conflict".

7. No U-turn. Day 40. 2 Sep. After a battering across radio, TV and the press, Greg Clark tells The Times and BBC Radio 4 Today that he is prepared to sit down and discuss the demands of the National Trust and other groups. He warns there is no prospect of a U-turn and he would not back down on simplifying planning laws in an attempt to trigger growth.

8. Sustainability undermined. Day 41. 3 Sep. In a Channel 4 debate between Greg Clark and Ben Cowell of the National Trust, Clark says: "I want the buildings that we build in the future to enhance the environment". He claims the NPPF contains a precise formulation of the brownfield first concept. Shaun Spiers tells the BBC the proposals will give too much say to developers and "sustainability is undermined" at every point in the NPPF.

9. Determined to win this battle. Day 43. 5 Sep. Eric Pickles and George Osborne launch an attack on green groups in the Financial Times: "Opponents claim, falsely, the government is putting the countryside in peril. In recent years, planning has come to be seen as a tool to say 'no' to growth; as a means to delay and block. This government will change that. The idea that presumption in favour means that growth will be able to take place wherever, whenever and however is false. No one should underestimate our determination to win this battle."

10. National Trust meets Clark & says no appeasement. Day 45. 7 Sep. The Telegraph reports the National Trust is due to meet Greg Clark. Afterwards, Fiona Reynolds tells BBC Five Live: "We're not prepared to enter into talks until we have a clear statement, from the highest levels of government, clarifying that the planning system is not there principally to promote economic development."

11. Local newspapers thunder on NPPF. Day 47. Sep 9 (and many others). If you read just one of the 200 media links in this eBulletin, read this one. Martin Hesp writes in the Western Morning News: "Handing over the keys of our green, pleasant and productive land to property developers in the name of economic security is the most bankrupt idea I've heard in 35 years of rural journalism. You can only concrete over the countryside once" (<http://bit.ly/nlgBNF>).

12. Max Hastings interjects. Day 48. Sep 10. In a major article in the Financial Times, former CPRE president Max Hastings defends CPRE's attacks on the NPPF and says: "The planning fiasco adds insult to injury to the Tory faithful. The housebuilders' interests are not those of the British people" (<http://on.ft.com/qqjAB7>).

13. Building free for all. Day 46. 8 Sep. Property developers could be free to build "what they like, where they like" under the Coalition's controversial planning rules, the front page of the Telegraph claims.

14. Apathy. Day 49. Sep 11. The Guardian and Sunday Times report widespread apathy over planning. A YouGov poll, commissioned by the National Trust, found that 70% of people said they were "not very likely" or "not at all likely" to get involved in their neighbourhood plan.

15. Planning changes to be forced through. Day 50. Sep 12. The Telegraph published an email that suggests that Greg Clark has urged the British Property Federation to lobby for the NPPF. The BPF boasts in the email that the industry has "earned more brownie points than we could ever imagine" by helping Clark. The Telegraph leader says: "The revelations that the planning minister, Greg Clark, has privately urged developers to lobby David Cameron undermine his claims of objectivity." The Daily Mail says: "George Osborne last night declared war on campaigners fighting controversial planning reforms—by saying he was determined to force the changes through".

TEN FAULTS WITH THE NPPF

1. The Purpose of Planning

"It's not a case of a simple rewrite of a few words here or there—the general tone of the planning framework is fundamentally wrong. The primary role of the planning system is to provide an arena in which all the economic, social and environmental aspects can be looked at and good solutions found for the long term." Fiona Reynolds, National Trust.

What's wrong? In such a short document where every word counts, the overall tone matters. No one would expect the tone of the NPPF to be anything other than pro-development but this draft relegates the environment, heritage and communities into a third-rate billing against a gung-ho rush for growth. Moreover, in a series of statements in recent months, ministers have made it clear that the overriding purpose of planning is to promote growth. Improving environment, heritage and communities should be as important in planning policy as economic progress and the delivery of much needed housing.

What needs to be done? The NPPF must begin with a clear statement about the purpose of planning being for the good of communities and the environment, as well as aiding economic success. The tone throughout the document must be fine-tuned to champion communities and the landscapes they live in.

What might happen? Fiona Reynolds has told the government there will be 'no talks unless we agree what planning is for.' It will take David Cameron to overrule the Osborne/Cable diktat in the *Plan for Growth* that the purpose of planning is economic growth. There are no signs of Cameron showing any particular interest. As the National Trust tweeted last week "if only he'd return our calls..."

2. The Presumption of Sustainable Development

"What the government is talking about is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, but if you read the NPPF in its draft form, what is clear is that it is a presumption in favour of development, and at every point sustainability is undermined." Shaun Spiers, CPRE.

What's wrong? The specifics of the text and the domineering influence of the presumption in favour of sustainable development inexorably undermines the ethos of sustainability. It is impossible to come away from the draft NPPF without the impression that 'growth' has been simply replaced with 'sustainable growth'. There is an assumption that all development can either be made sustainable, or compensated for by ecological investment or cash payments to communities. All individual proposals, the NPPF says, should be granted unless the adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. Planning committees have always found it difficult to balance the often competing demands of environment and the economy. Despite eighty-one references to the 'sus word' in the draft NPPF, planning committees are really being told: "it's the economy, stupid".

What needs to be done? Ministers will need to accept that sustainability is more than building houses, factories and superstores. A legal definition of sustainable development is essential but as we go to press ministers are saying "no" to this. We also need a definition of sustainable development that works in planning committees as well as the glossy reports that circulate Westminster.

What might happen? The abuse of the 'sus word' was brought to perfection under John Prescott's planning regime. 'Sus abuse' doubt will continue.

3. The Default Answer to Proposals is “Yes”

What’s wrong? The presumption will mean that development will be approved ‘without delay’ if it is in line with the local plan. Few major developments currently pass on first submission to a planning committee and the built environment is so much better for that. The NPPF means that hasty acceptance of the first planning application on offer will become the norm and the necessary negotiations to improve developments will become a rarity. By declaring the default answer to be ‘yes’, the NPPF severely undermines local democracy and largely reduces councils to rubber stamping bodies.

What needs to be done? The default answer to planning applications should only be ‘yes’ when they are good enough in all their aspects, not just conformity with the local plan. The NPPF must not undermine the responsibility of planning authorities to evaluate against the local plan and planning policies. Councils must be able to negotiate for quality development.

What might happen? It makes no political sense for ministers to open the floodgates to the very worst of development in the Tory shires. If local politicians do unnecessarily hold back development, ministers will relish opportunities to berate councillors for failing to deliver the goods. Eric Pickles will be in his element. Just perhaps the government will replace the word “yes” with an approximation of “maybe”.

4. The Silence of the Plans

“The government wants to bring in a new system almost overnight... the unintended consequences of this haste are greater confusion, uncertainty for the development industry and anxiety for communities.” RTPI past Presidents.

What’s wrong? NPPF will create an almost entirely permissive regime in areas where local plans are not up to date or do not conform with the new guidance. In cases where a plan is ‘absent, silent, indeterminate’ or ‘out of date’, the NPPF instructs that planning applications should nearly always be approved. This demolishes local planning at a stroke for at least 70% of councils who do not have an up to date local plan. Existing local plans will have to seek a certificate of conformity with the NPPF and few details of what this means have been released. Detailed national guidance on a range of matters is deleted by NPPF, allowing bulldozers to be driven through the gaps opened in policy coverage until local planning authorities are able to plug them with new local policies or in the courts.

What needs to be done? This issue will undoubtedly occupy the courts for some years to come. The government needs to issue detailed guidance on the transition between the existing and new planning system. The diktat that almost anything goes where plans are silent must be removed.

What might happen? There is little indication that ministers even begin to comprehend the chaos that a plan-less plan-led planning system will cause. The courts will be busy. Expect awful puns in red top newspapers such as: “Judge tells Pickles he is in a Pickle”.

5. 20% Extra Land Supply for Housing

What’s wrong? It is not land supply that is holding up housing growth. Nevertheless, aiming to “create more competition and choice” the NPPF proposes raising the identified allocation by 20% over and above the five year supply currently required by PPS3. This will draw more greenfield sites into the housing pool (windfall brownfield sites are all but excluded from the 5 years plus 20% quota). Greenfields will be

targeted by developers first. Councils will also need to urgently revise their Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments. While they do so, there will be increased pressure to approve sites that would not pass muster under a rationale planning regime.

What needs to be done? The five year supply was a rolling target and perfectly adequate. Builders already have a huge bank of planning permissions. The additional 20% needs to be removed from the NPPF.

What might happen? The government will come under great pressure from developers to keep to this commitment to free up desirable greenfield sites. Expect a deluge of planning applications for Clarksville, Picklestown and Osborneville. As we go to press the Chief Planner trying to clarify the 20% rule in the professional press. More in the next eBulletin.

6. Brownfield

“If you look closely at the framework, paragraph 165, it states very clearly that the land that should be brought into use is that of the lowest environmental value first... a precise formulation of the brownfield first concept.” Greg Clark.

What wrong? The draft NPPF contains no targets for the level of housing to be delivered on brownfield land. The current target is 60% and is often exceeded. The abolition of targets and brownfield first will increase pressure on green field sites and compromise efforts to regenerate inner areas. Clark’s desperate plea on Channel 4 News that paragraph 165 is a precise formulation of brownfield first policy is, to borrow a word from Mr Clark himself, ‘risible’.

What needs to be done? A new target would be the ideal but at the very least the concept ‘brownfield first’ has to be unambiguously woven into the fabric of the NPPF.

What might happen? Ministers have no enthusiasm for brownfield or inner cities. They have failed to make the intellectual link between constraining greenfield development and regeneration. Developers will resist any attempt to prioritise less profitable brownfield developments but green groups will fight hard for a long cherished and effective principle.

7. Green Belt

What’s wrong. The overall protection for green belts remains intact but the NPPF is nibbling away at the edges of the policy, and as always with our green belts, the edges matter. Community Right to Build schemes, transport infrastructure, renewable energy developments, and a wider range of brownfield sites all now get a look in.

What needs to be done? The green belts have long been under-utilised as environmental and community assets. But these proposals are set to urbanise the green belt with a whole range of developments including rail parkways. At the very least, developments should pass a test of exceptional need, as well as the NPPF tests of maintaining: “the openness and purposes of including land in the Green Belt”.

What might happen? Green groups, especially CPRE, will stick out for maximum green belt protection. Developers already have their eyes on prime development land and will push the test of openness to the limit. One unexpected consequence may be that gypsy and traveller communities target brownfield sites in the green belt that are not currently in the local plan. Planning authorities may find it difficult to reject these planning applications as the default answer is ‘yes’ and small sites can be well screened. This may go a long way to preventing problems like Dale Farm. It may not go so far towards winning ministers popularity with communities in the green belt.

8. The Countryside

What's wrong? Planning Policy Statement 1 set out a national planning objective: 'protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment, the quality and character of the countryside, and existing communities'. It is a commitment that has been in place in one form or another since town and country planning was invented. The draft NPPF has slashed this national ambition back to a meagre: "protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment". The NPPF no longer champions town and country planning, with its long held emphasis on place shaping. The natural and historic environment has become a mere 'asset' to be horse-traded in the planning system.

What needs to be done? The NPPF needs a clear commitment to constraining urban sprawl, and to maintaining the distinctive characteristics of townscapes and landscapes. The countryside needs to be recognised as a special place that is more than the sum of the natural and historic environment.

What might happen? Not much. Ministers have shown no instinctive feel for the countryside and how planning might shape and protect it. They, and many environmentalists, are hugely attracted to pricing environmental assets.

9. Heritage and Culture

What's wrong? The NPPF protects heritage assets unless 'the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use', a phrase wide open to abuse. Protection is limited to Grade II* and above. The NPPF also fails to protect heritage assets from harm caused by inappropriate development within their setting.

What might be done? Conservationists want Grade II buildings and monuments included. Planning has long cared little for the setting of heritage assets, as the City of London shows, but there is urgent need for such protection.

What might happen? English Heritage initially expressed its concern at the proposals but has since shamefully publicly denied its own criticism. There is still some hope that limited protection for the setting of heritage assets might be included in the NPPF.

10. Town Centres

What's wrong? Although the NPPF retains a 'town centre first' approach for retail and leisure development, office developments are no longer included. This undermines city and town centres as locations for new commercial developments. The NPPF fails to recognise that people who work in town centres also shop there, and that moving workers out of town centres will undermine both local and clone shops.

What needs to be done? Commercial developments should be subject to the same sequential test, town centre first, as retail and leisure developments.

What might happen? Although even the government recognises that out of town business parks will not lead to sustainable transport, it is unlikely to give any ground on a policy that will see large landbanks of greenfield land rapidly released for business parks. Expect to see your local MP opening a business park on a greenfield site near you any time soon.

FIFTY DAYS IN THE GREAT PLANNING ROW

Key players. **Shaun Spiers**, Chief Executive, CPRE. **Fiona Reynolds**, Director General, National Trust; **Simon Jenkins**, Chairman, National Trust. **Greg Clark**, Communities and Local Government (CLG) Minister for Decentralisation, Cities and Planning; **Bob Neill**, CLG Parliamentary Under Secretary of State; **Grant Shapps**, CLG Minister for Housing and Local Government; **Andrew Stunell**, CLG Parliamentary Under Secretary of State. **CLA**, Country Land & Business Association. **HBF**, Home Builders Federation. **FoE**, Friends of the Earth. **RTPI**, Royal Town Planning Institute. **TCPA**, Town and Country Planning Association. **Note:** Most quotes are abbreviated.

Day -65. 20 May. The Practitioners Advisory Group (PAG) submits its draft NPPF to Greg Clark (<http://bit.ly/qJAhtO>). No reaction from environmental groups.

Day -46. 14 Jun. CPRE South East publishes an eBulletin dissecting the PAG draft, warning: "No one should be the least surprised if the draft NPPF, and the near silence in which it has been greeted, encourages ministers to stride on with the ongoing erosion of protection for the countryside, environment and communities" (<http://bit.ly/nppfpagse>).

Day -20. 4 Jul. A second CPRE South East eBulletin analyses a leaked government draft of the NPPF dated 14 June. It warns: "Those responsible for England's green and pleasant land are coming under the Imperius Curse of Eric Pickles, and this needs to be stopped before the bulldozers become unstoppable" (<http://bit.ly/nppfleak>). Environmental groups hold their fire.

Day 1. 25 Jul. The government publishes its draft NPPF for consultation (<http://bit.ly/nppfcon>), along with a detailed Impact Assessment (<http://bit.ly/nppfia>). The **National Housing Federation** warmly welcomes the NPPF (<http://bit.ly/pHDJu3>).

Day 2. 26 Jul. The National Trust comes out fighting. **Fiona Reynolds** tells Today on BBC Radio 4: "Both the tone and the words of the NPPF are sending a very different message that planning is to promote growth, not to protect the environment" (<http://bbc.in/n1cOm9>). Talking to the press, she says the reforms could lead to damaging development in the undesignated countryside on a scale not seen since the 1930s. "This finally sounds the death knell to the principle established in the 1940s that the planning system should be used to protect what is most special in the landscape" (Telegraph: <http://tgr.ph/qEmRXn>; Guardian: <http://bit.ly/p1DPrg>; <http://bit.ly/rpPjVG>). A surprised and outraged CLG issues a hasty press rebuttal (<http://bit.ly/nziTRs>).

Day 3. 27 Jul. The Communities and Local Government Committee announces an inquiry into the draft NPPF in October (<http://bit.ly/r9SSUn>). In the Guardian, Peter Hetherington writes: "Get Britain Building? Absolutely. But let's proceed by producing well-planned, well-connected new settlements, rather than identical new estates plonked miles from anywhere". The Guardian editorial says: "As things stand, the presumption in favour of sustainable development will reward developers while neglecting sustainability... the precise opposite of everything ministers promised" (<http://bit.ly/qaceRQ>; <http://bit.ly/qkRh8X>). The NFU welcomes the NPPF (Farmers Guardian: <http://bit.ly/q0IMix>).

Day 4. 28 Jul. In the Guardian, **Greg Clark** says: "Far from having the potential to cause environmental degradation, the framework will protect the countryside from encroachment and prohibit development that is clearly in conflict with its powerful environmental safeguards" (<http://bit.ly/rnb8CY>). In the same issue **Simon Jenkins** says: "Planning, once proudly independent, is now effectively an arm of Cable's department. It is told that it must not act as an impediment to growth. This stands on its head the purpose of planning, which is to guard the public interest irrespective of market forces" (<http://bit.ly/qeMBPq>).

Day 5. **29 Jul.** CPRE South East publishes a special eBulletin analysing the consultation draft of the NPPF. It cautions: “For years to come, the government has issued a Licence to Kill Good Planning and unleashed a rush to develop that will disrupt communities and trash England’s treasured green fields and landscapes” (<http://bit.ly/cpreseppf>).

Day 9. **2 Aug.** CPRE South East’s regular eBulletin warns of a “2012 Planning Gap of Olympian proportions. Green fields, town centres, communities and tranquillity will be churned underfoot as developers sprint ahead leaving good planning on the starting blocks. This will be Eric Pickles’ Olympian legacy for rural life and landscapes” (<http://bit.ly/cprese0711>).

Day 12. **5 Aug.** Terrance Blacker writing in the Independent: “What has a Cameron government, with the countryside in its bones, actually done? It has gleefully torn up the regulations [that] to protect and cherish the landscape” (<http://ind.pn/qJAXB0>).

Day 13. **6 Aug.** The Telegraph publishes CPRE’s map of the ten largest areas for greenfield housing development. Bob Neill accuses the CPRE and National Trust of being “vested interests” run by “left wingers” peddling “deeply misleading and simply untrue” claims. Shaun Spiers says the “60,000-member CPRE is preparing to take the attack directly to David Cameron” (<http://tgr.ph/qPinqF>; <http://tgr.ph/oJJ9Wm>; <http://tgr.ph/pcL0bn>; <http://tgr.ph/phiQrd>; <http://tgr.ph/ocXJxn>; CPRE: <http://bit.ly/qhrdC6>). Dozens of letters from CPRE supporters condemning the NPPF begin appearing in local newspapers.

6 to 10 Aug. Riots in London and elsewhere saturate media.

Day 14. **7 Aug.** Treasury minister Justine Greening says in the Express: “Reform of the planning system is vital. These changes will keep important environmental safeguards firmly in place while helping businesses” (<http://bit.ly/nldSiL>). Shaun Spiers responds to Bob Neill’s jibe in the Guardian: “I’m under lots of pressure from our branches, who are impeccably Middle England, to take the gloves off and to be much more oppositional and confrontational on this” (<http://bit.ly/nwdtRD>).

Day 15. **8 Aug.** In the Independent, CPRE Essex Chairman Tom Holme predicts “an urban dystopia beckons”. Greg Clark responds to Terrance Blacker claiming: “the status of the countryside is unchanged in the draft NPPF” (<http://ind.pn/pzAVn9>). Shaun Spiers and the National Trust hit back at Bob Neill in the Daily Mail (<http://bit.ly/nwdtRD>). The Times says that ministers are “risking a rural rebellion over the threat to green belts” (<http://thetim.es/pXEshx>).

Day 16. **9 Aug.** Sean Traverse-Healy of CPRE East tells the BBC: ‘Every developer is dusting off his old plans and with a weakened planning system some of them will succeed where they might have otherwise failed’ (<http://bbc.in/mTFRVY>).

Day 17. **10 Aug.** CPRE’s Ben Stafford attacks the NPPF in the Yorkshire Post (<http://bit.ly/nQBNeW>).

Day 18. **11 Aug.** CPRE Surrey says the NPPF means “we risk losing a lot of countryside that’s not in the green belt, and the green belt itself being nibbled away, bit by bit” (Get Surrey: <http://bit.ly/ng12e8>).

Day 19. **12 Aug.** Referring to CPRE and the National Trust, Chancellor George Osborne is bullish in Daily Mail: “We must rise to confront the vested interests. They are the forces of stagnation that stand in the way of growth” (<http://bit.ly/oh40Xc>).

Day 20. **13 Aug.** The Telegraph features a CPRE analysis that reveals that swathes of land, including in the green belt, will be redesignated to allow development. MP Jake Berry, aide to Grant Shapps, is venomous: “The CPRE can’t have their cake and eat it. It’s gross hypocrisy for them to take thousands of pounds of taxpayers cash to assist with the government’s planning reforms yet at the same time be shamelessly opportunistic and attack them” (<http://tgr.ph/pjTCXu>).

Day 21. **14 Aug.** In a letter to the Telegraph, CPRE Chairman Peter Waive and Simon Jenkins say they “are deeply concerned that without a fundamental rethink, these proposals will place at huge risk our countryside”. On the same page, minister Andrew Stunell claims: “The suggestion by certain groups that the Government’s planning reforms put the Green Belt in peril is wrong” (<http://tgr.ph/mOWH6l>).

Day 24. **17 Aug.** The HBF grumbles that the debate risked being “hijacked by scaremongering from narrow minded anti-growth groups” (<http://bit.ly/olpQEL>).

Day 26. **19 Aug.** National Trust launches its *Planning is for people, not for profit* campaign (<http://bit.ly/ntppf>). CPRE says the planning reforms threatens wildlife goals in the new Biodiversity Strategy (Guardian: <http://bit.ly/n3FOJj>; Telegraph: <http://tgr.ph/nCKjOk>; CPRE: <http://bit.ly/pYUE5Z>).

Day 28. **21 Aug.** The Observer suggests the government will engage in an NHS-style listening exercise to defuse the planning row (<http://bit.ly/pkiV12>).

Day 29. **22 Aug.** Ministers step up their condemnation of green groups. In the Financial Times, Greg Clark says those who sought to “preserve in aspic” their towns were guilty of “nihilistic selfishness” because they will prevent young people from getting on the housing ladder. He condemns as “risible” the [alleged] National Trust claims that areas of green belt will be threatened by the changes and rounds on CPRE: “Frankly you couldn’t change any element of national planning policy without the CPRE objecting to it”. CPRE responds that the crude message from the government is “build, build, build” (FT: <http://on.ft.com/nN3Amg>; <http://on.ft.com/qdu3IN>; <http://on.ft.com/q9Amde>).

Day 30. **23 Aug.** The Telegraph leader says this “Tory-led administration has set out to convince rural England that its green fields and bucolic vistas should not be sacrosanct. But it is not making a very good fist of it” (<http://tgr.ph/mSZqGj>). BBC Radio 4 *You and Yours* debates the planning reforms (<http://bbc.in/pYVyxE>).

Day 31. **24 Aug.** CPRE Protect Kent joins the criticism of Greg Clark: “[His] comments do seem very defensive. He’s normally a measured politician. They are not really appropriate for a minister” (Kent News: <http://bit.ly/nKyeTI>). In the Telegraph, Clive Aslet says: “The Coalition’s changes to planning regulations threaten to tear the heart out of our green and pleasant land” (<http://tgr.ph/qnGyyM>). In the Guardian, Shaun Spiers writes: “It is far from obvious that moving towards a Greek-style planning system is the key to a stronger economy, or that Britain needs an Irish-style development boom based on a weak planning system” (<http://bit.ly/p4jQOL>).

Day 32. **25 Aug.** In a letter to the Financial Times, Shaun Spears says: “The prime minister has often spoken of his love of the English countryside. Unless he is prepared to see huge damage to the countryside—and a huge political battle—he should order a rethink of the planning proposals, starting with the default ‘yes’ to development” (<http://on.ft.com/mULu7g>). The FT editorial says: “Berating opponents will not win the day. The planning system can be reformed only by winning over those that are affected by its decisions” (<http://on.ft.com/n16r7I>). CPRE South East’s eBulletin opines: “The truth is that the government’s planning reforms are intellectually bankrupt. They are root and branch bad planning, and are a disaster in the making for the countryside” (<http://bit.ly/cprese0811>). Richard Nicholls of CPRE Dorset says: “This new legislation doesn’t take into account the landscape, the environment, and the countryside itself” (Dorset Echo: <http://bit.ly/pRTXmC>).

Day 34. 27 Aug. Conservative and Liberal councillors attack the presumption in favour of development. A poll says 54% of people favour simpler planning rules, but 44% back the National Trust's claims that the plans would "probably pose a serious risk to the countryside". A Conservative Home survey finds the government's planning reforms are backed by only 45% of its grassroots party members (Telegraph: <http://tgr.ph/nlmZ0I>; YouGov: <http://bit.ly/qqyqaI>). In a letter to David Cameron, property company CEOs hit back at claims that the new NPPF will allow unrestricted development on the green belt (Inside Housing: <http://bit.ly/oLoztI>). **Greg Clark** tells the Guardian there will be no greenfield development without the sanction of local authorities (<http://bit.ly/o0VbbC>).

Day 35. 28 Aug. The Telegraph reports that the UK's leading housebuilders have stockpiled enough land to build more than 600,000 homes. The **HBF** denies developers are building landbanks in expectation of the new planning regime (<http://tgr.ph/prptH8>). The Observer editorial says: "Alarmist claims that the green belt, that most protected of regions, is under threat from the reforms appear way off the mark. But the fear is that we will end up with sprawling conurbations whose peripheries boast upmarket homes that few starting on the property ladder can afford" (<http://bit.ly/n16WPw>). The Sunday Times says the RSPB, CPRE, Woodland Trust, WWF and Friends of the Earth all believe the NPPF will encourage councils to allow beauty spots be bulldozed (<http://thetim.es/rjiXtt>).

Day 36. 29 Aug. The **Campaign for Better Transport** warns the planning shake-up is likely to lead to the construction of more out-of-town business parks (FT: <http://on.ft.com/ohSx9R>). In the Times, CPRE's **Kate Houghton** counters claims by the HBF that reforms to planning are needed because planning permissions are falling (<http://thetim.es/raHr2t>; <http://thetim.es/pkSmZb>).

Day 37. 30 Aug. The Guardian hosts an online debate on the NPPF (<http://bit.ly/qq5QXp>). "CLG Ministers should be terrified. Ignore rural England at your peril", tweeted @john_vidal as he blogged in the Guardian (<http://gu.com/p/3xtkt/tw>; <http://bit.ly/nUHbk1>). CPRE's **Kate Houghton** debated with the HBF on BBC Radio 5 Live (<http://bbc.in/oNZf3d>; starts 02:05).

Day 38. 31 Aug. The Daily Telegraph launches its *Hands Off Our Land* campaign. Its leader says the government's actions are "a shameful way to treat rural Britain. The Coalition is trying to railroad its national planning policy framework without debate" (<http://tgr.ph/o5NyRb>). In the Times, Alice Thompson predicts a revolt in the Coalition's rural support if the NPPF goes ahead unchanged. Business Secretary **Vince Cable** describes campaigners against the proposals as "semi-hysterical" (<http://thetim.es/q3gTH1>).

Day 39. 1 Sep. Newsnight pitches a confident National Trust chairman **Simon Jenkins** head to head with **Greg Clark**. Jenkins says he loves the Localism Bill but the NPPF ruins it: "It's a dud document". He unsuccessfully presses a harassed Clark to withdraw the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Clark offers to open talks: "If there are particular aspects or sentences that you don't think express clearly enough the protections that are there, then let's talk about it" (Newsnight: <http://bbc.in/nHmDWC>; BBC: <http://bbc.in/qgwLt5>). The Telegraph describes the NPPF as a builders' charter, saying it could lead to more than 1,000 extra major developments every year (<http://tgr.ph/puLHuX>). CPRE's **Fiona Howie** tells the newspaper: "It is the biggest reform since the 1947 Town and Country Act" (<http://tgr.ph/nwEE1r>). The **CLA** calls the debate ill informed and claims: "If the current unbalanced planning policy continues, the countryside and all it contains will not survive" (<http://bit.ly/noousK>).



Day 39. 1 Sep continued. In a letter to the Telegraph, **Shaun Spiers** says: "the Government has chosen to swap one form of imposition—Labour's top-down housing targets—for another, in which development is pushed through without proper respect for places or the people who love them." In the same column, twenty three past presidents of the RTPI say: "The current debate in the media about planning reform has now descended into open hostility on all sides. The unintended consequences of [the government's] haste are greater confusion, uncertainty for the development industry and anxiety for communities." The letter ends in Churchillian tones: "the RTPI stands ready to bring the parties together to address the confusion and to resolve the conflict" (<http://tgr.ph/qTzlu2>). "Does the Conservative party not realise that people vote for it only because they believe it will conserve things?", Alexander Chancellor writing in the Guardian (<http://bit.ly/rTFDy1>). The Times leads with the NPPF on its front page (<http://thetim.es/qRw4rb>). Bruce Tremayne of **CPRE Oxfordshire** tells the county press: "It should be remembered this land is not only beautiful but also an economic asset but we fear that the use of the word sustainable is a mere figleaf" (<http://bit.ly/qaZvhL>). The Institute for Archaeologists says the NPPF: "could lead to sites and buildings of archaeological interest being destroyed without adequate investigation, analysis and dissemination" (<http://bit.ly/oIVskD>). The Theatres Trust says the omission of culture from the draft NPPF means that planners could favour sporting and historic buildings over cultural ones (<http://bit.ly/pLYgLb>). **Save Our Woods** says the NPPF is in breach of the European Landscape Convention which Britain signed in 2006 (<http://bit.ly/nZkT4n>).

Day 40. 2 Sep. After a battering across radio, TV and the press, **Greg Clark** tells The Times and BBC Radio 4 Today that he is prepared to sit down and discuss the demands of the National Trust and other groups. He warns there is no prospect of a U-turn and he would not back down on simplifying planning laws in an attempt to trigger growth. **Fiona Reynolds** responds: "At last Greg Clark has indicated that he is prepared to talk. We're happy to do so, but it's not a case of a simple rewrite of a few words here or there—the general tone of the planning framework is wrong" (Times: <http://thetim.es/oZDJG6>; PA: <http://bit.ly/ngO1r6>). "Don't be fooled by the use of the term 'sustainable'. This is simply a charter for development", Richard Vize writes in the Guardian (<http://bit.ly/rfo87W>). In the Telegraph, the Renewable Energy Foundation says the NPPF will make it easier for developers to build 4,500 new wind turbines against the wishes of local people (<http://tgr.ph/qoQifl>). In a video for the Telegraph, **Greg Clark** protests the government will protect the green belt (<http://tgr.ph/pbDLcc>). "Who will champion the countryside? Not, it is becoming increasingly clear, the two political parties that have traditionally represented it", Geoffrey Lean writes in the Telegraph (<http://tgr.ph/qfjrfX>). In an alternative view, Charles Moore blames the planning system for "uniformly ugly new housing being crammed into villages and on the edge of towns" (<http://tgr.ph/q3K1FI>).

Day 41. 3 Sep. Developer Stuart Robinson tells Channel 4 News that concerns had been "severely overdramatised. It's absolute nonsense. There'll be no stripping away of green belts." In a live debate between **Greg Clark** and Ben Cowell of the **National Trust**, Clark says: "I want the buildings that we build in the future to enhance the environment. If you look closely at the framework, paragraph 165, it states very clearly that the land that should be brought into use is that of the lowest environmental value first". He claims this is a precise formulation of the brownfield first concept (<http://bit.ly/qe19Tr>). **Shaun Spiers** tells the BBC the proposals will give too much say to developers: "If you read the NPPF in its draft form, what is clear is that it is a presumption in favour of development, and at every point sustainability is undermined" (<http://bbc.in/qgwLt5>).

Day 41. 3 Sep continued. “No one, least of all this Government, desires to return to the bad old days of jerry-building and urban sprawl”, **Greg Clark** writes in a letter to the Telegraph (<http://tgr.ph/pTPHo3>). The Telegraph reports that English Heritage is concerned the NPPF will have a devastating effect on historic buildings and sites (<http://tgr.ph/n2rGQy>). **Fiona Reynolds** urges ministers to stop the insults and start listening to the widespread concerns about the planning reforms (Telegraph: <http://tgr.ph/qklymv>).

Day 42. 4 Sep. Referring to banks as well the green lobby, **David Cameron** tells the Sunday Mail: “My order to Whitehall this autumn is to think even more boldly about what we can do to put the turbo-boosters on Britain’s economy—and nothing should be taboo. If that means taking on all the lobby groups that are defending every last bit of the regulation that crushes businesses—then we will do it” (<http://bit.ly/nYVfs2>). In the Observer, CPRE President **Bill Bryson** joins the debate: “The government’s good intentions risk being undermined by the talk of economic growth at any cost. We are deeply worried to learn that environmental laws are regarded as red tape and that the planning system might be weakened to allow for more development” (<http://bit.ly/n0QFBt>). The Observer editorial describes the NPPF as a “frighteningly cavalier document. There has been surprise that the Conservatives seem so keen to alienate their natural supporters” (<http://bit.ly/qJQkVG>; also <http://bit.ly/pqKK0f>; <http://bit.ly/PHYTOI>).

Day 43. 5 Sep. Just as Greg Clark begins making conciliatory noises, **Eric Pickles** and **George Osborne** come out fighting in the Financial Times: “Opponents claim, falsely, the government is putting the countryside in peril. In recent years, planning has come to be seen as a tool to say ‘no’ to growth; as a means to delay and block. This government will change that. The government is ready to debate the framework – based on facts, not myths. The idea that presumption in favour means that growth will be able to take place wherever, whenever and however is false. No one should underestimate our determination to win this battle” (<http://on.ft.com/pHpUHG>; <http://on.ft.com/odGUBg>; <http://on.ft.com/ruTgKJ>). CPRE says ministers are “talking, not listening” (<http://bit.ly/qD6IUr>). The FT leader says: “Far from engaging in a temperate debate about the merits of the proposals, the critics seem determined to whip up hysteria, along the lines of the campaign to ‘save’ Britain’s forests... But Britain’s existing planning rules are not fit for purpose, and on this issue the government should stick to its guns” (<http://on.ft.com/psRyAD>). Also in the FT, **Clive Aslet** says: “Rather than building more premium homes for owner occupation on green field sites, the government should be attracting large-scale investors to provide the rental property for which there is greatest need” (<http://on.ft.com/oNHikI>). **Greg Clark** tells the Commons: “We are determined to preserve the character of middle England—but young England needs a roof over its head too. It is very clear—I am completely open about this—that we want to have the fullest possible debate” (Hansard: <http://bit.ly/oo3jx0>; BBC: <http://bbc.in/pM4gBZ>). The **Woodland Trust** calls for a rethink saying: “No development should bring about the loss of ancient woods or trees” (Telegraph: <http://tgr.ph/obQBYb>). Jackie Sadek in the Estates Gazette says: “We cannot afford any failure of courage, as witnessed by the fudging of the health reforms or the buckling in the face of the forestry lobby” (<http://bit.ly/oTAFQe>). **English Heritage** complains: “We are concerned that there is no policy to help decision-makers deal with proposals where there is moderate or minor harm to designated heritage assets [and] that the strong bias towards giving permission may unintentionally and unnecessarily tip the scales against heritage protection” (<http://bit.ly/nQIdfM>).

Day 44. 6 Sep. Phillip Johnson writes in the Telegraph: “Ministers are living in cloud-cuckoo land if they seriously believe that this is a campaign being waged by a tightly knit group of politically motivated people” (<http://tgr.ph/nB2I36>). **Fiona Reynolds** tells the newspaper that she is happy to talk to ministers but the plans are “fundamentally wrong” (<http://tgr.ph/o3sLH0>). The Telegraph leader says: “The Government is facing a nasty dilemma. It can press ahead with moves to shake up planning laws, thus alienating its supporters in the shires, or it can perform a humiliating U-turn” (<http://tgr.ph/roSKLe>). In the Guardian, **George Monbiot** writes “There is a simple test of the government’s intentions. If there’s a presumption in favour of sustainable development, there must also be a presumption against unsustainable development” (<http://bit.ly/q0qz29>). On 24dash, **Andy Boddington** says its “time to solve the National Planning Policy Foul-Up” (<http://bit.ly/24nppf>). Brian Groom writes in the Financial Times: “You cannot fault the bravery of Mr Cameron and his planning minister, Greg Clark: taking on the National Trust and a swath of Tory-voting rural dwellers takes nerve” (<http://on.ft.com/pQiCOK>). In the Commons, **George Osborne** says: “these are sensible protections for the countryside, but we must also allow economically productive development in this country. We have to simplify a planning system that is completely unintelligible to most citizens” (<http://bit.ly/peMASw>). During the day, the #nnpf hashtag begins to trend on Twitter.

Day 45. 7 Sep. The Telegraph says the National Trust is due to meet the government today as opposition anger continues at the NPPF proposals (<http://tgr.ph/mOU14u>). In a letter to the Independent, **Andy Boddington** writes: “The draft NPPF promotes bad planning and inexorably undermines protection for landscapes and townscapes” (<http://ind.pn/rifJi0>). The Telegraph says: “Planners have been told to start approving developments on the basis of the Coalition’s controversial new planning guidelines.” The **National Trust** snorts: “So much for consultation.” CLG pleads that it did not instruct the Planning Inspectorate to issue the guidance and calls in Sir Michael Pitt for a ticking off (<http://tgr.ph/oH36kS>). The Guardian reports that **Fiona Reynolds** has written to all 3.8 million National Trust members asking them to sign the petition and protest to their MPs. The newspaper also quotes a leading planning lawyer: “This is really a presumption in favour of development. If that’s what the government intends then they shouldn’t be dressing it up as sustainable” (<http://bit.ly/qSHowf>). The National Trust’s Ben Cowell tells BBC Radio 4 Today: “We see planning as being there to protect the public interest in landscape, heritage, and the everyday places in which people live and work” (<http://bbc.in/oS3omi>). In the Times, Alice Thomson says ministers need to search for common ground (<http://thetim.es/nk1fdR>). The Garden History Society is the latest specialist group to express concerns (<http://bit.ly/oxp4fg>). The **Suffolk Preservation Society**, CPRE’s presence in Suffolk, criticises the NPPF (<http://bit.ly/pAfY9V>). **Fiona Reynolds** and CPRE’s **Kate Houghton** both speak on BBC Five Live. Fiona says “We’re not prepared to enter into talks until we have a clear statement, from the highest levels of government, clarifying that the planning system is not there principally to promote economic development” (BBC: <http://bbc.in/qXwU8x>).

Day 46. 8 Sep. Property developers will be free to build “what they like, where they like” under the controversial new planning rules, says front page of the Telegraph (<http://tgr.ph/oVAMoC>). In the Daily Mail, Chef Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall joins **Jack Neil-Hall** from CPRE in condemning the NPPF. Hugh says the new rules would put the grow your own boom at risk by squeezing land for allotments (<http://bit.ly/qmtIM0>; <http://bit.ly/oyLEpe>; <http://bit.ly/lyph5A6x>; PA: <http://huff.to/pts6en>).

Day 46. 8 Sep continued. **Fiona Reynolds** speaks on BBC 1 Breakfast about the threat to allotments. On 24dash, **Andy Boddington** says its “time for Fiona Reynolds to pick up the phone to David Cameron” (<http://bit.ly/fifonedave>). @nationaltrust later tweets in response: “if only he’d return our calls...”. **Fiona Reynolds** tells the Financial Times the planning system should not be turned into “a tool for promoting economic growth” (<http://on.ft.com/otat7>). George Monbiot in the Guardian says the NPPF is “the most blatant product of corporate power that this government has yet produced” (<http://bit.ly/t9z7JN>). The Countryside Alliance says: “The National Trust and CPRE are right to raise concerns over some parts of the guidance” (<http://bit.ly/qOesXv>). After a meeting arranged by Wildlife and Countryside Link, attended by CPRE, RSPB Chief Executive Mike Clarke said: “I know first hand how Government rhetoric and weasel worded policy statements can lead to the wrong development in the wrong place. The Government is clearly not close enough to the day to day reality of the planning process otherwise it would understand our concern” (<http://bit.ly/mYIFnF>). In a “myth buster”, the HBF says “If 250,000 homes were built annually for 25 years just 1% of England’s land mass would be used” (<http://bit.ly/q9KGTJ>). Save Our Woods says its “time to look at case studies from abroad & allow public participation” (<http://bit.ly/r1OcPa>).

Day 47. Sep 9. Roger Scruton writes in the Telegraph: “With its planning reforms, the Government is betraying the heritage that so many have fought to preserve” (<http://tgr.ph/roNZus>). The Telegraph says: “Communities would have to pay up to £1,000 to apply to save their green spaces from the developers’ bulldozers under plans to speed up the planning process” (<http://tgr.ph/oJ7Fna>). CPRE says “big developers such as supermarket chains will still be able to bully communities into accepting building they do not want” (PA: <http://bit.ly/ox2uJm>). CPRE called on ministers to keep to their pre-election promises and rebalance the planning appeals system with a limited community right of appeal (<http://bit.ly/oR8WvP>). After meeting Clark, **FoE** said: The government must change tack. If ministers refuse to listen they may face a nasty shock at the ballot box” (<http://bit.ly/nOv21y>). Martin Hesp writes in the Western Morning News: “Handing over the keys of our green, pleasant and productive land to property developers in the name of economic security is the most bankrupt idea I’ve heard in 35 years of rural journalism. You can only concrete over the countryside once” (<http://bit.ly/nIgBNF>). **Andrew Stunell** says it is absolutely wrong that allotments are threatened by the NPPF (24dash: <http://bit.ly/odL61z>). The government announces: “We are looking at a fast-track way of adjusting existing plans rapidly to meet the NPPF where necessary,” (Planning: <http://bit.ly/ptxXJi>; Lainton: <http://bit.ly/qrV5hn>). The Green Alliance says: “The Coalition has pulled off the remarkable trick of making land use planning interesting” (<http://bit.ly/px9z01>).

Day 48. Sep 10. In a major article in the FT, former CPRE president **Max Hastings** defends CPRE’s attacks on the NPPF and says: “The planning fiasco adds insult to injury to the Tory faithful. The housebuilders’ interests are not those of the British people” (<http://on.ft.com/qjAB7>). “Green and pressured land: Attempts to speed up planning are dividing communities—and generations” (Economist: <http://econ.st/om9Rs6>). The Telegraph reports that property developers have given £3.3 million to the Tory party over the past three years, including large gifts from companies seeking to develop rural land (<http://tgr.ph/qAR7EC>). Among a number of letters to the Telegraph, former CPRE Chairman **David Astor** says “We must hope that this government has as much courage as” previous Tory administrations. In another letter, Baroness Andrews denies that: “English Heritage is not one of those organisations generally opposed” to the NPPF (<http://tgr.ph/mYYWDX>).

Day 48. Sep 10 continued. Also in the Telegraph Geoffrey Lean says: “Opponents of the Coalition’s planning reforms are being given short shrift” (<http://tgr.ph/ph3Hui>). The Telegraph and Guardian say: “Ministers pushing through controversial plans to relax Britain’s planning laws are facing accusations of “breathtaking hypocrisy” after it emerged that they had tried to block developments in their own constituencies” (<http://tgr.ph/oxrUJc>; <http://bit.ly/pPDHZw>). A Kent councillor tells the Guardian: “Greg’s heart’s in the right place, but I believe the government has lost its way on this” (<http://bit.ly/gcflak>).

Day 49. Sep 11. The Guardian and Sunday Times report widespread apathy over planning. A YouGov poll, commissioned by the **National Trust**, found that 70% of people said they were “not very likely” or “not at all likely” to get involved in their neighbourhood plan. Only 4% said they were “very likely” to get involved (<http://bit.ly/nsju4O>). The Sunday Times says the NPPF has been written by a director of Wimpey Homes. The Telegraph says the “Coalition’s push for localism is undermined by planning inspectors” (<http://tgr.ph/nG1wIr>). On his blog, Andrew Dainton examines “Why the political chickens have come home to roost on planning” (<http://bit.ly/chickpot>).

Day 50. Sep 12. The Telegraph published an email that suggests that Greg Clark has urged the British Property Federation to lobby for the NPPF. The BPF boasts in the email that the industry has “earned more brownie points than we could ever imagine” by helping Clark (<http://tgr.ph/clarkcheats>). The Telegraph leader says: “The revelations that the planning minister, Greg Clark, has privately urged developers to lobby David Cameron undermine his claims of objectivity” (<http://tgr.ph/oXW155>). Liz Peace, BPF CEO responded: “I don’t accept that this amounts to collusion” (<http://bit.ly/p9Jqqa>). The Daily Mail says: “George Osborne last night declared war on campaigners fighting controversial planning reforms—by saying he was determined to force the changes through” (<http://bit.ly/n3NunO>). Also in the Mail, Andrew Pierce says “For a Tory minister to alienate the National Trust and the Campaign For The Protection Of Rural England,—by definition, both ‘small c’ conservative bodies—is quite an achievement”; Melanie Phillips says: “How could the Tories—of all people—let developers rip out the lungs of England?” (<http://bit.ly/nse89Y>; <http://bit.ly/o6IzgV>). Dylan Sharpe of the Countryside Alliance writes in the Huntington Post: “There is a middle ground on planning and, unusually, it does make the most sense” (<http://huff.to/niSrlI>). CPRE South East publishes its fourth eBulletin on the NPPF saying “ministers are still struggling to shelter from the biggest storm in planning history”.

Day 51. Sep 13. *It has happened yet, but if ministers are hoping the Great Planning Row has ended, there are no signs at all of that!*

OBJECTING TO THE NPPF

The time to raise your voice is now. CPRE members might wish to refer to the briefing by our National Team seeking contributions to the national response (<http://bit.ly/p5T2qL>). But whether you a member of CPRE or not there is no substitute for making your own voice heard. I have not been able to do justice to the hundreds of letters in local newspapers and they do help influence opinion and encourage others to put pen to paper. The national newspapers are also publishing a high volume of letters on the topic, especially the Telegraph.

Objecting to the NPPF. The National Planning Policy Framework has been published by the government. The consultation ends on 17 October (<http://bit.ly/nppfsayno>). CPRE has also launched a convenient way to fire off your objections to the NPPF online (<http://bit.ly/cprenppfobj>).

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION THREATENED

Environmental protection threatened by “red tape”

review. In a three week consultation, Defra and the Department of Business are asking businesses for the views on 287 environmental regulations that apply to businesses, covering issues such as waste, emissions and wildlife protection. Incinerator proponent Robert Hunt of Veolia has been appointed as the ‘sector champion’ for cutting back environment and countryside regulations and laws. “Businesses up and down the country are being invited to contribute ideas” reads the government’s press release, but green and walking groups are already raising their voices in anger. The Ramblers complain that: “entire Acts which protect the environment, and people’s ability to access and enjoy it, are included in the list of so-called burdensome regulations” Ministers have their eyes on consumer product labelling, air quality, waste, and environmental reporting. Also under potential threat are the right to roam, restricted byways, National Park legislation including for the South Downs National Park), AONB legislation, including for the Cotswolds and Chilterns. A whole host of environmental laws and regulations are listed including parts of the Wildlife and Countryside Act and standards for the clean up of land (Closing date: 21 September. Defra: <http://bit.ly/ntrgiz>; Business Green: <http://bit.ly/oab0jf>; Grough: <http://bit.ly/nCyfLY>; E&EM: <http://bit.ly/oNyBRp>; Ramblers: <http://bit.ly/pTLf8r>).

THE CPRE SOUTH EAST eBULLETIN

Access to Online Newspapers. We provide links wherever possible to online editions of newspapers and magazines. Articles in the Times can only be viewed after payment of a subscription. Normally, we avoid Times’ articles for this reason. Ten articles a month can be read in the Financial Times after free registration; or via Google news if you search for the article and access it through a Google link. Planning magazine only allows one free page access a month, as do other specialist outlets such as Building and Property Week. It is often impossible to avoid citing Planning magazine on technical planning matters. All other newspapers we cite are free online.

The **CPRE South East eBulletin** is issued monthly, with special editions as needed. It’s free and you don’t have to be a member of CPRE. We cover all the planning and environmental news with a relevance to the remit of CPRE. If you do not receive a copy of the eBulletin directly, why not send your email address to cprenews@gmail.com?

Promotion. We can proudly boast that many of you will have first read about the NPPF controversy here in the *CPRE South East eBulletin* (96 days ago!). But if you like what you reading, why not join CPRE and swell the ranks of those passionately seeking a sensible approach to planning in our rural landscapes and towns (<http://bit.ly/joincpre>).

Editorial policy. Views expressed are those of the editor, not of any part of CPRE. Our audience is CPRE and its friends. Please feel free to circulate this eBulletin.

Andy Boddington, Editor.

Previous CPRE South East NPPF eBulletins

25 August 2011: News for August 2011, including the National Planning Policy Foul-Up (<http://bit.ly/cprese0811>).

July 2011: The National Planning Framework, Towns Green and Planning (<http://bit.ly/cpresenppf>).

5 July 2011: Draft National Planning Policy Framework—June Leak: (<http://bit.ly/nppfleak>).

14 June 2011: The Draft National Planning Policy Framework—NPPF (<http://bit.ly/nppfpagse>)